

RECOGNIZING ATTORNEY NEIL O'DONNELL, GREATER WILKES-BARRE FRIENDLY SONS MAN OF THE YEAR

### HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 21, 2023*

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, today I honor Attorney Neil O'Donnell who was named the Man of the Year by the Greater Wilkes-Barre Friendly Sons of St. Patrick. He was honored at the group's annual gathering on March 17, 2023.

Neil graduated with honors from Kings College in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, before matriculating at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. He was admitted to the Pennsylvania Bar in 1987 and began practicing law that same year.

Neil spent three years working for the Philadelphia-based law firm of Baskin, Flaherty, Elliott & Mannino. He returned to Northeastern Pennsylvania in 1990 and started the O'Donnell Law Offices. Over the past 30 years, Neil has grown the O'Donnell Law Offices into one of the leading legal practices in Northeastern Pennsylvania. He has cultivated an impressive reputation through his commitment to practicing to the highest standard.

In addition to the Pennsylvania Bar, Neil is admitted to the Middle District of Pennsylvania and Eastern District of Pennsylvania District Courts, the United States Third Circuit Court of Appeals and the United States Supreme Court. For his legal acumen, he has been named to the Pennsylvania Super Lawyers Top 100, the National Trial Lawyers Top 100, Best Lawyers, American Society of Legal Advocates Top 100 Lawyer, Rue Ratings Best Attorneys of America and National Association of Distinguished Counsel. He also received a Martindale Hubble AV Preeminent Rating and is a Litigation Counsel of American Fellow. Neil has shared his extensive legal experience with his peers as a presenter for leading attorney groups like the Pennsylvania Association for Justice, Melvin Belli Society and the Brain Injury Association of California.

In addition to his legal practice, Neil has served as the chair of the Senatorial Advisory Committee Panel for the Selection of United States Attorneys and U.S. Marshals for the Eastern, Western and Middle Districts of Pennsylvania. He is the co-chair of the Senatorial Advisory Panel for the Selection of the U.S. District Court. This past November, Neil was named to the 11-person board for the Governor Josh Shapiro and Lieutenant Governor Austin Davis's Transition after their election.

I am honored to join with the Greater Wilkes-Barre Friendly Sons to recognize Neil as the Man of the Year. His career has been marked by impressive integrity and service to the legal profession, and I am proud to celebrate his many achievements and contributions to the field of law and our community. I wish him the best.

HONORING CHUCK McMINN

### HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 21, 2023*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chuck McMinn, the St. Helena Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year for his excellent work in our community.

Mr. McMinn is a graduate of Harvard business school and a successful Silicon Valley entrepreneur. Mr. McMinn and his wife Anne purchased the Vineyard 29 winery in the Napa Valley in 1999. They began producing Cabernet Sauvignon and established a beacon of environmentally sustainable winemaking, combining a passion for excellent wine with responsible production. The winery uses an on-site well and generates electricity on-site, minimizing its impact on the Napa Valley ecosystem. These and other sustainability practices allow Vineyard 29 to be 250 percent more efficient in how it utilizes natural resources, ensuring that the area can continue to supporting winemaking for generations to come.

After moving to Napa Valley, Mr. McMinn has also worked tirelessly in various philanthropic pursuits to improve our area. Mr. McMinn founded Napa-Learns, a nonprofit devoted to providing students in Napa County with valuable skills and resources through innovative public education programs. He also founded the Rail Arts District, a contemporary outdoor art museum designed to extend the benefits of public art to the semi-industrial neighborhoods of Napa Valley. As a board member of the St. Helena Hospital Foundation, the St. Helena Viticultural Society, and Appellations St. Helena, Mr. McMinn has extended his time, passion, and energy to the Napa Valley community.

In addition, Mr. McMinn is the founder and board president of the nonprofit Napa Valley Vine Trail Coalition. Under his leadership, the Vine Trail board team has grown to include members and organizations representing a broad spectrum of community and civic interests. This dedicated all-volunteer team share a vision to build a continuous trail connecting the entire Napa Valley from Vallejo's Ferry Terminal to the foot of Mount St. Helena. The Vine Trail will link the entirety of Napa Valley, physically, culturally, and artistically. The benefits of such a trail include increased tourism, a safe and environmentally friendly commuting alternative, and greater access to the beautiful and diverse Napa community.

Mr. Speaker, it is evident that Mr. McMinn has worked selflessly for the betterment of the Napa Valley community. Therefore, it is fitting and proper that we honor him here today.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF  
RICHARD JOHNSON

### HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 21, 2023*

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Richard Johnson, who retires this March from 42 years of consummate service to the Town of Glastonbury—nearly 30 of

which have been as Town Manager. Richard's leadership has helped Glastonbury maintain its standing as a highly successful community in Connecticut, which I am proud to say has a large footprint in the Second District of Connecticut as a result of redistricting under the 2020 census. I have had the pleasure of knowing of Town Manager Johnson's work over the years as a Member of Congress, a state legislator and a town attorney from the neighboring town of Vernon and can personally attest to his dedication to the Town of Glastonbury.

Born in Avon, Richard has always been a true-blue, central Connecticut native and was destined to serve one of that region's many thriving communities. Armed with a Connecticut education—a bachelor's from Southern Connecticut State University and an MBA from the University of Connecticut—Richard was uniquely equipped to ensure Glastonbury's upward trajectory. Richard's career with the Town of Glastonbury began in 1980, first as Glastonbury's Parks and Recreation Director and then as Assistant Town Manager. With nearly 13 years of experience, he was appointed to the permanent position of Town Manager in 1993. Since becoming Town Manager, he has become an institution of knowledge in service of the town's interests.

As Town Manager, Richard has worked with 15 town councils, including some 50 community leaders. Richard brokered more than 60 land acquisitions and preservation projects, totaling more than 2,500 acres, that in his words, "helps shape the community, preserves our farms, open spaces, and riverfront land". Under his visionary leadership, the town acquired and converted brownfields into what is now the iconic Riverfront Park and Riverfront Community Center and Boathouse, the very location where his retirement celebration is to be held. His persistence and tenacity over the years also must not go unappreciated. For example, he recently helped the town achieve a multigenerational goal by way of the acquisition of a roughly 540-acre property, previously owned by the Metropolitan District Commission. Town Manager Johnson's leadership in this land acquisition demonstrates the strength of Glastonbury's officials and process, setting an example that ought to be emulated across the state and nation.

Richard has also famously worked to strengthen the town's capital improvement program, which led to its receiving of an AAA bond rating from both Standard and Poor's and Moody's Investors Service. These ratings have and will continue to bolster Glastonbury's ability to attract capital for municipal projects well beyond his retirement. As Glastonbury's steward for more than a generation, countless projects under Richard have rightfully been recognized on the national and local level.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Johnson's unwavering loyalty to and love for the Town of Glastonbury public has made him a fearless leader and honorable civil servant. Throughout his tenure, the town has been recognized with accolades including the Engineering Excellence Award, the National Recreation and Park Association's Innovation in Park Design Award, Climate Leader Designation, Nationally Accredited Police Department, and countless others. Richard's conscientious approach to leadership has forged him into the epitome of a good public servant. Though Glastonbury is